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6/24/98

NSC BRIEFING

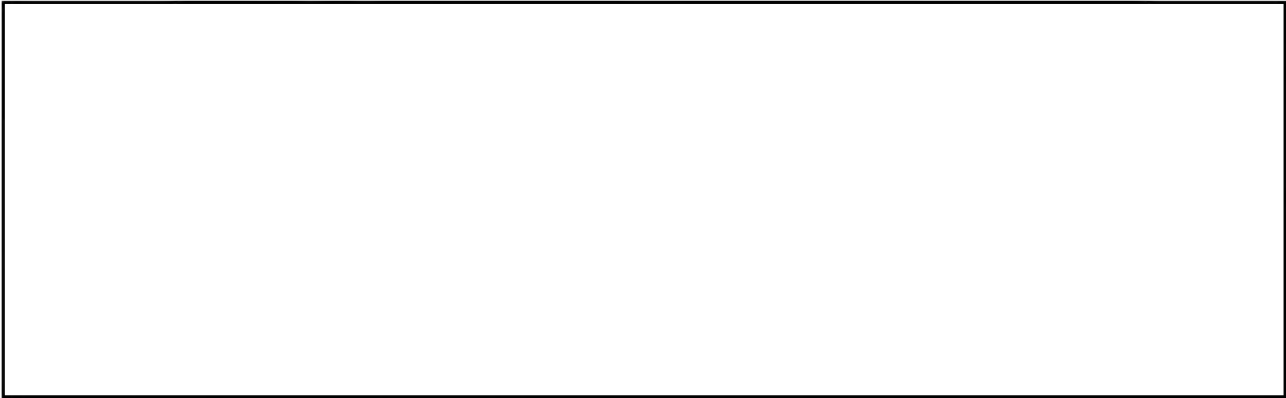
24 February 1956

GREEK ELECTIONS

- I. Prime Minister Karamanlis' victory in 19 February Greek elections gives him control of new parliament. However, Communist-inspired activity in new parliament will also be at new peak.
 - A. Karamanlis' own "National Radical Union" (ERE) won at least 161 of total 300 seats, although polling only some 46% of popular vote.
 - B. Popular Front coalition of Center and Left Parties, which opposed ERE, has already split.
 1. Leaders of Center parties, controlling about 70 seats, have announced support for Karamanlis on foreign policy.
 2. Their future voting, however, will be determined by Karamanlis' ability to satisfy their minimum demands.
 - C. Popular Front successes at polls, however, mean that the Communist-influenced bloc in new parliament will be largest in Greek history.
 1. Communist-front United Democratic Left (EDA) got 18 seats, and fellow-travelling Democratic Party (DKEL) got 20.
 2. Constant maneuvering against Karamanlis can be expected from this leftist bloc.
- II. Karamanlis' new government, with parliamentary majority, will try to apply itself to Greece's pressing domestic and foreign problems.

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1. The Communist-influenced minority, having won some measure of respectability, will have forum for its propaganda from which to harass and embarrass government.
 2. Greek political parties consist traditionally of personal followers, and tendency of politicians to stray away or defect is always strong.

III. Karamanlis' tenure depends on:

- A. His ability to win public support by a successful program of economic improvement.
- B. His success in handling to the satisfaction of public sentiment such emotion-charged issues as Cyprus dispute with Britain, Greek-Turkish relations.

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GREEK ELECTIONS

I. Two major contenders, the National Radical Union of Prime Minister Karamanlis and a Communist-supported "popular front" the Democratic Union, are running neck and neck as Greek election campaign goes into final week.

A. Elections (19 Feb) will determine all 300 seats in Greek parliament.

B. Both parties have entered in all 41 electoral districts.

II. Karamanlis appears at present to have a slight edge.

A. His campaign in Northern Greece "successful beyond best expectations."

B. Public support for Karamanlis from Cypriot Archbishop Makarios refutes opposition claim that Premier is bowing to UK and US pressure.

C. Consensus of informed Greek opinion, including palace circles, is that Karamanlis will win a majority.

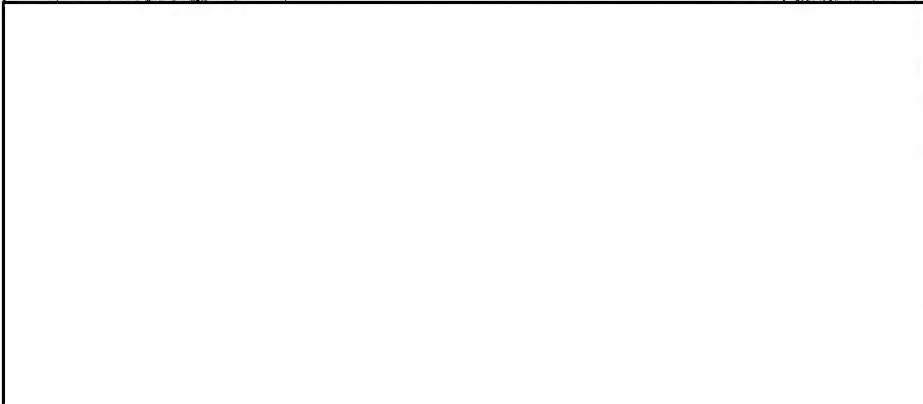
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III. Averse trend in international affairs
could tip balance in favor of opposition.

A. Ambassador Cannon believes publication
of Cyprus negotiations might harm
Karamanlis.

B. New Greek-Turkish incident could
increase neutralist feeling.



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